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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000118

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A A/S CARTER, AF/SPG, AND AF/C
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: CHADIAN REBELS - ERDIMI PLEDGES POLITICAL
ENGAGEMENT FIRST, BUT WILL RETURN TO THE FIELD WITHIN WEEKS

REF: KHARTOUM 106

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)
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¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On January 29, the newly-selected Chadian rebel leader Timane Erdimi (reftel) told polchief and poloff that his movement, the Union of Resistance Forces (UFR), will focus first on political and diplomatic engagement, and only later consider an attack on the Chadian Government. Erdimi expressed interest in sending UFR envoys to both Paris and Washington for meetings with senior French and American officials, to encourage French and American leadership supporting negotiations with President Deby. Erdimi also reported that rebel leadership had reached consensus on almost all Cabinet positions including the first Vice President Adouma Hassaballah Djadarab, and Abdelwahid Aboud Makkaye as Second Vice President. END SUMMARY.

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT FIRST
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¶2. (C) Erdimi opened the meeting stating that the UFR will focus first on political and diplomatic engagement before staging an attack on the Government of Chad (GoC). Polchief replied that UFR should reach out to President Deby and seek to participate in a political dialogue with him. The USG is not in favor of more violence or war in Chad or in Sudan. He added that staging an attack on Chad would be a huge risk for the UFR, that many observers perceive the Chadian rebels as a tool for the Sudanese Government, and that by associating closely with a regime under investigation for war crimes and genocide, the rebels endanger their reputation and cause. Erdimi responded that the Chadian rebels "are not a puppet of the Sudanese Government and Khartoum cannot tell us what to do, where to go, or how long to stay." Erdimi also claimed that the UFR is not affected by Khartoum's interests and that the UFR has not yet declared war or made any threats to the GoC. "We talk to Deby's people all the time, but Deby always refuses to negotiate," stated Erdimi. As an example of UFR's political focus, Erdimi stated that UFR had recently reached consensus on most of its political positions, including the appointment of Vice President Adouma Hassaballah Djadarab, and Abdelwahid Aboud Makkaye as Second Vice President. Erdimi directed poloffs to a press statement on www.tchadactuel.com listing these appointments (the full text of which can be found in Paragraph 7.)

DESIRE TO SEND ENVOYS TO THE WEST
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¶3. (C) Erdimi stated that the UFR would like to send a representative to both Paris and Washington to explain UFR's position and correct misperceptions about the Chadian armed

opposition. He said that UFR is already speaking with the French Embassy in Khartoum about this, and inquired about when and how UFR could send an envoy to the U.S. Erdimi claimed that his movement also has many contacts within the French government, and further claimed that these contacts have received "positive feedback" that there is now an option to President Deby. Erdimi complained about the perceived lack of US policy on Chad, noting "we are frustrated that the U.S. has only viewed Chad through its Darfur policy, and we need to look at Chad through an independent lens" given the many problems with Deby's leadership and governance. If the U.S. first focuses on Chad and its internal politics, then the problems of Darfur will be much easier to solve, stated Erdimi.

DEBY'S BRUTALITY AND EXECUTION OF SISTER

14. (C) Erdimi repeated (as reftel) that Deby ordered the execution of his sister following his selection as UFR president. (Note: Erdimi appeared visibly distraught while discussing this issue. End Note.) Erdimi reported that the majority of his family is now in Cameroon and that his relatives (who are Deby's relatives too) remaining in Chad will soon flee the country. Erdimi then returned to a litany of complaints against Deby including his brutality, corruption, and thirst for power. (Note: Also on January 29, the UFR issued a press release listing many of these same complaints. The release states that the GOC's "violent reaction" to rebel unity proves "that we made the right choice in creating our movement." The statement then claims that Deby has destabilized neighboring countries to divert attention from Chad, that he is the source of shame, injustice, and waste in Chad. The release can be found on

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many websites such as: www.tchadactuel.com. End Note.)

ENGAGEMENT WITH ZAGHAWA AND POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN CHAD

15. (C) When asked about UFR's relationship with the political opposition inside Chad, Erdimi responded that "of course" his movement has a relationship with many different opposition parties and leaders within Chad. He noted, however, that this relationship alone will not bring the necessary change to Chad. Likewise, Erdimi appeared dismissive of repairing the fractured relationship between Chadian and Sudanese Zaghawa, splintered into numerous armed opposition movements, clans, and competing political orientations. "The problem is not about reconciling the Zaghawa tribe, the problem is Deby," stated Erdimi. Erdimi stated that he will only remain in Khartoum for one or two more weeks before returning to the field, and that he welcomes further meetings with the U.S. Embassy before his departure.

WAR OF WORDS BETWEEN GOS AND GOC

16. (SBU) Also on January 29, Sudanese Government officials publicly lashed out at Chad for its support of the Darfur rebel movement, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Sudanese television prominently featured Presidential Assistant Nafi Ali Nafi expressing concern over Chad's continued support of Darfur rebels, and accused the GOC of disregarding its agreements with Sudan. Sudanese Minister of Information Kamal Obeid also provided similar statements to the Sudanese state news agency SUNA, and accused Chadian troops of attempting to supply JEM fighters inside Sudan after weeks of fighting in South Darfur.

COMMENT

16. (C) Erdimi appeared less eager to stage an attack than other UFR members (as reported reftel). Although Erdimi said the right things about diplomatic engagement, the fact that he will soon return to the field may signal UFR's true plans. In order to succeed, the rebels will rely upon an element of

surprise, and it may be possible that Erdimi was intentionally attempting to deceive U.S. officials of UFR's real intentions. Erdimi's visible distress over his sister's death, his dismissive attitude toward Chadian political opposition, and the impatience of his fighters (who have now been sitting idly in the field for over 6 months) are all likely other factors that may motivate UFR to make a move against the GOC in the coming weeks. Post recommends some sort of Washington outreach to Erdimi to at least try to delay renewed rebel military action.

OTHER UFR APPOINTMENTS

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17. (U) Begin text from www.tchadactuel.com:

"UFR: Communiqué de Presse

Les presidents des mouvements fondateurs de l'UFR reunis a Hadjar Marfaine ont procede a la designation par consensus le lundi 26 janvier des camarades Adouma Hassaballah Djadarab 1er Vice president et Abdelwahid Aboud Makkaye 2eme Vice President et le mercredi 28 janvier des autres membres du bureau executif dont la composition est comme suit:

Secretariat General - Abakar Tollimi
Secretariat General Adjoint - Mahamat Ahmat Ishakh
Delegue aux Armees Adoum Yacoub
Delegue Adjoint aux Armees - (not assigned)
Delegue a la communication Porte Parole - Abderaman Koulamallah
Delegue a la communication Porte Parole Adjoint- Guihini Korei
Delegue aux Finances- Djibrine Assali
Delegue Adjoint aux Finances - Saadadine Ali Mahmat
Delegue aux Relations Exterieures - Albadour Acycl Ahmat Aghbach
Delegue Adjoint aux Relations Exterieures - Abdelkerim Omi
Delegue a la Securite et a l'Administration du Territoire - Zakaria Charafi
Delegue Adjoint a la Securite et a 'Administration du Territoire - Kerim Bori
Delegue aux Affaires Juridigues - (not assigned)
Delegue Adjoint aux Affaires Juridigues - Alio Abdoulaye Ibrahim
Delegue aux Affaires Sociales et Victimes de Guerre - Adam

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Dafaalla
Delegue Adjoint aux Affaires Sociales et Victimes de Guerre - Hassan Abaye
Delegue a la Sante - Ahmat Alio
Delegue Adjoint a la Sante - Allamine Hidjazi Fazari
Delegue au Controle General - Mahamat Cherif Djako
Delegue Adjoint au Controle General - Adjil Malloumi

Mahamat Djarma Khatre
President de la Commission Ad Hoc"
FERNANDEZ